



Johns Creek exploring state's 1st ThrU-turn at Medlock Bridge & State Bridge Rds

Johns Creek is developing a concept for Georgia's first ThrU-turn intersection as a novel solution to relieve congestion and improve safety at the nexus of its two busiest roads.

The project, if approved, would be intended to move traffic more efficiently through the intersection of Medlock Bridge and State Bridge roads. The project was first presented to the City Council in March 2015, but no decisions have been made and limited funding has been committed.

Under the ThrU-turn concept, motorists who want to turn left actually drive through the intersection, double back at a designated U turn protected by a traffic signal, and then head back to the intersection where they then make a right.

"It seems counter-intuitive, but people will actually spend less time driving through the intersection and making a U turn than they do sitting through two or three red lights," said Johns Creek Public Works Director Tom Black.

Computer-modeling shows the ThrU –turn, also called a "Michigan Turn" after its place of origin, will reduce wait times by an estimated 75 percent. The ThrU-turn has been successfully implemented by several states. However, its unusual configuration could be a challenge, especially for the uninitiated.

According to the Federal Highway Administrations, studies show that total crash reductions ranging from 20 to 50 percent can be expected with this level of conflict reduction. Moreover, head-on and angle crashes that have high probabilities of injury are lower for ThrU-turn intersections compared to conventional intersections.

The project would cost about \$4 million but could be accomplished primarily within the existing right of way. The City is seeking federal and state grants to help cover the cost of the project, which would start in 2017 at the earliest, if approved.